

VZCZCXRO3318  
RR RUEHIK  
DE RUEHTC #0619 2921208  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
R 191208Z OCT 09  
FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3356  
RUEHRC/DEPT OF AGRICULTURE WASHDC  
RUCPDOG/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC  
INFO RUEHAT/AMCONSUL AMSTERDAM 4269  
RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS THE HAGUE 000619

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EEB/TPP/ABT AND EUR/ERA  
USDA FOR FAS  
STATE PASS TO USTR

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ECON](#) [EAGR](#) [ETRD](#) [PREL](#) [TBIO](#) [NL](#)

SUBJECT: NETHERLANDS TO VOTE YES ON BIOTECH MAIZE APPLICATIONS AT  
OCTOBER 19 EU MEETINGS

Ref: (A) STATE 106819, (B) THE HAGUE 387

¶1. Emboffs delivered Ref A points to Bart van den Assum, Coordinator for Biotechnology at the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature, and Food Quality, and Frans Koster, Policy Officer at the Dutch Product Board for Margarine, Fats, and Oils. According to these contacts, Dutch Minister of Agriculture Gerda Verburg will vote to approve the import of three genetically modified maize varieties (MON 88017, MON 89034 and Pioneer 59122XNK603) in the October 19 EU Agriculture Council meeting. Dutch representatives also will vote to approve the import of MIR604 maize and Syngenta's Bt11 maize in the October 19 meeting of the EU Standing Committee on Food Chain and Animal Health. During her Agriculture Council vote, Minister Verburg will include a statement stressing the urgency for the EU to agree on a "technical solution" to allow the low-level presence of GMOs in the EU food supply, and to adopt socio-economic factors for the approval of GMOs for cultivation.

¶2. Van den Assum and Koster explained that the minister's statement is the result of a compromise between those parties in the Dutch parliament that support GMOs (the Christian Democrats - the Netherlands' largest party and the cornerstone of the current three-party ruling coalition government, and the Liberal Party), and those that oppose GMOs (the Christian Union - also a member of the ruling coalition, and the Socialist Party). The minister's position is in keeping with Dutch efforts to find a workable solution to the long-standing GMO impasse in the EU. The Dutch government and industry supported EU Commissioner Fischer Boel's September 7 call for a review of the EU's zero tolerance policy toward GMOs, and they want a speedy resolution to the current U.S.-EU dispute over the trace presence of MON 88017 and MIR604 in U.S. soy exports to the EU.

¶3. Further, the Dutch government has proposed that EU Member States (MS) be allowed to formally consider socio-economic factors when reviewing applications for the cultivation (not/not importation) of GMOs. This proposal would not change the EU's current application process; rather, it would add a step at the end (after a cultivation application had been approved at the EU level), whereby individual MS could evaluate socio-economic factors and decide whether to approve the product for cultivation in that country. The Dutch assert that this additional step would enable the EU approval process to remain focused on scientific criteria and risk analysis, while giving MS an opportunity to consider socio-economic criteria separately. Ideally, this would result in a more transparent discussion and allow the EU to achieve a qualified majority for approvals. See Ref B for more details on this proposal.

GALLAGHER